

Passage Is Essential

1. H.B. 6329: Dissection choice mandatory in the classroom

a. Reasons why needed

- i. Student testimonials that the odor and distaste of dissection is among the most pervasive and discouraging element of high-school science
- ii. The moral choice of the high-school students to choose not to cause or encourage animal suffering
- iii. The opportunity for schools to save money by not requiring them to purchase dissection material, and to efficiently teach the same lessons with greater focus in less time, allowing teachers to cover other material
- iv. Environmental pollutants are used to preserve dead specimens (formaldehyde and its diluted form formalin)—these are also respiratory irritants and carcinogens. Careless or irresponsible disposal of them can contaminate water, soil, and potentially harm wildlife.
- v. Frogs are an indicator species for climate change and very vulnerable, with many more species either being added or requested on the ESA list—yet many frogs used for dissection are wild-caught
- vi. Students can learn just as well, if not more, from computerized simulations of the same animal; many students who used simulated versions of dissection lessons earned higher scores than the students who dissected dead tissue. (Source:)
- vii. National Science Teachers Association, while encouraging the use of animal dissection in the classroom, also notes that teachers should provide “a meaningful alternative” particularly when considering students’ age and maturity level. — Personally, I can’t believe the NSTA takes this position—see the research on animal abuse and human abuse...NSTA is deciding to “let the professional teacher decide” rather than taking a real position based on the evidence. Notably this is an old position, stated in 2005, revised 3/08; technology has leapt forward with affordable HD images and 3D ability since then
- viii. Illinois legislature “finds that the use of dissection . . . can result in the inhumane treatment and unnecessary suffering of animals. The inappropriate or careless use of dissection in schools has also in some instances traumatized students and contributed to a failure to teach proper respect for life and living creatures.” 105 Ill. Comp. Stat. 112/5

b. Other states?

- i. According to , 9 states have pro-alternative laws on the books and 5 other states offer informal policies allowing alternatives to dissection. The ASPCA adds Vermont to the list:
- ii. Student choice law exists in:
 1. California
 2. Florida Stat. § 1002.20 (3)(c)
 3. § 105 Illinois 112/15 and § 105 Illinois 112/20
 4. New Jersey Rev. Stat. § 18A:35-4.25
 5. New York Educ. Law § 809

6. Oregon Rev. Stat. § 337.300
 7. Pennsylvania Stat. § 15-1523
 8. Rhode Island Gen. Laws § 16-22-20.
 9. Vermont Stat. tit. 16, § 912
 10. Virginia Code § 22.1-200.01
- iii. Informal policies (resolutions) allowing dissection alternatives exist in:
1. Louisiana
 2. Maine
 3. Maryland
 4. Massachusetts
 5. New Mexico
- c. Fiscal impact: probably negligible; most likely save districts money since teachers could provide lessons from online programs using computers and service already present in the classroom and would be required to order fewer animal carcasses (ugh)
- i. _____ offers easy online alternatives to teachers and a balanced article explaining the reasoning behind offering alternatives. See
 - ii. _____ also includes links for frog, fetal pig, starfish, worm, and grasshopper dissection
 - iii. However, Illinois requires the State Board of Ed to make available sources of alternatives for schools. This is a good idea but may adversely impact the state's budget to a minor degree. See §105 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/2-3.122